



*Charting the Safe and Successful Return of  
Prisoners to the Community*

## **A Fact Sheet on Re-Entry and the Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council**

### **More and more people are being released from prison and jail in the US every year.**

- Two million Americans are serving time in prison. Ninety-seven percent of those people will be released.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Nearly 650,000 people are released from prison each year, and over 7 million are released from jails, in the U.S.<sup>3,4</sup>
- About 1 in 32 adults in this country was in jail or prison, or on probation or parole, in 2002.<sup>5</sup>

### **The increasing numbers of people released from prison and jail has had significant implications for community safety and state and local government budgets.**

- Approximately 2 out of every 3 people released from prison in the US are re-arrested within 3 years of their release.<sup>6</sup>
- Revocation of conditions of release is the fastest growing category of admissions to prison.
- American taxpayers spent \$9 billion for corrections in 1982; by 2002, the figure went up to \$60 billion.<sup>7</sup>
- Spending on corrections has been the fastest- or second-fastest growing item in state budgets over the last 15 years.<sup>8</sup>

### **Adults leaving prison or jail face many challenges as they re-enter the community.**

- More than 1 out of 3 jail inmates reported some physical or mental disability.<sup>9</sup>
- 16 percent of the population in prison or jail has a mental illness. In 1997, individuals released from prison or jail accounted for nearly one-quarter of all people living with HIV or AIDS, almost one-third of people diagnosed with hepatitis C, and more than one-third of those diagnosed with tuberculosis.<sup>10,11</sup>
- 3 out of 4 have a substance abuse problem, but only 10 percent in state prisons and 3 percent in local jails receive formal treatment prior to release.<sup>12,13</sup>
- 55 percent have children under 18; on average, incarcerated parents owe more than \$20,000 in child support debt upon their release.<sup>14</sup>
- 2 out of 3 lack a high school diploma, and 40 percent have neither a diploma nor a GED. Only about 1 out of 3 gets vocational training at any point during incarceration.<sup>15</sup>
- Nearly half of those in jail earned less than \$600 per month just prior to incarceration.<sup>16</sup>

### **Just a handful of communities in each state receive the majority of people released from prison or jail.**

- 15 percent of the neighborhoods in Baltimore receive 56 percent of the people released from Maryland state prisons.<sup>17</sup>

- In Connecticut, almost half of the prison and jail population is from just a handful of neighborhoods in five cities—the cities with the most concentrated levels of poverty and nonwhite populations in the state.<sup>18</sup>
- Approximately 1800 out of 7400 releasees in Kansas each year return to just a handful of neighborhoods in Wichita.<sup>19</sup>

### **Communities lack resources to meet the needs of those who make the transition from a correctional facility to the community.**

- In California, a study found significant gaps between the needs of parolees released in the state and available services: there were only 200 shelter beds for more than 10,000 homeless parolees, 4 mental health clinics for 18,000 psychiatric cases, and 750 treatment beds for 85,000 released substance abusers.<sup>20</sup>
- In Chicago, only 24 percent of identified organizations that provide services to re-entering individuals were located in any of the six communities to which the highest numbers of people returned from prison in 2001. No services were located in two of those six neighborhoods.<sup>21</sup>
- A California study reported that while 10 percent of the state's parolees were homeless, an estimated 30 to 50 percent of parolees in metropolitan areas such as San Francisco and Los Angeles were homeless.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council is the result of a series of bipartisan meetings among over 100 leaders in public safety and health and human services systems.**

- Each section of the Report includes an overarching policy statement; detailed research highlights on relevant re-entry data; recommendations on implementing the policy statement; and examples of programs, policies, and practices from different jurisdictions.
- The recommendations trace an individual's process from admission until successful re-entry, with policy guidance at every key decision point throughout that process: intake, institutional programming, transition planning, release decision-making, and community supervision.

### **Recommendations in the Report can be distilled into the following key points:**

- Get started by bringing together a diverse group of state and local government agencies and community-based organizations relevant to prisoner re-entry, and provide these stakeholders with good information about released prisoners, like how they are prepared for their transition to the community; where they go after their release, and for what violations they return to prison.
- Consider the core challenges that are likely to impede the progress of a re-entry initiative: changing missions, maximizing the value of existing funding, integrating systems, measuring outcomes, and educating the public.
- Develop policies and programs that provide the following:
  - Smart release and community supervision decisions
  - Support for victims
  - Safe places to live
  - Substance abuse treatment
  - Services for physical and mental illness
  - Meaningful relationships
  - Training, education, and jobs.
- Understand and appreciate what needs to happen to make housing, workforce development, substance abuse treatment, health, mental health, and children and family systems accessible and effective generally and for the re-entering population.

**The Report identifies dozens of examples of programs whose administrators cite data demonstrating the positive impact their efforts have made.**

- **Project RIO (TX):** The Texas Department of Corrections' employment program helps people both during their incarceration and while they are under community supervision seek, find, and maintain employment in their home communities. An evaluation found that participants had a recidivism rate of 23 percent, while non-participants had a recidivism rate of 38 percent. Moreover, 69 percent of those in the program found employment, versus 36 percent of their recently released counterparts.
- **Project Bridge (RI):** Project Bridge offers a holistic social support model for people with HIV/AIDS both during their incarceration and after release. Of 134 Project Bridge participants, 83 percent completed the entire 81-month program, 90 percent stated engaged in medical care after program completion, and only 3 percent were re-sentenced.
- **Knoxville Public Safety Collaborative (TN):** Working together, the Knoxville Police Department, the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parolees, and area human service providers together have formed a collaborative to formulate case management plans for individuals that are at risk of re-offending in Knoxville. An evaluation found that individuals who participated in the program were revoked 38 percent less often than individuals released before the program was implemented. Additionally, among the cohort of program participants, nearly 45 percent fewer people were re-incarcerated within two years of release, compared to a control group.
- **Safer Foundation (IL):** Safer provides job training, job development, job placement, and supportive employment for people returning to Cook County from state prison. Whereas Cook County had a recidivism rate of 42.5 percent among parolees, only 23.8 percent of Safer Foundation program participants returned to the state criminal justice system.
- **KEY-Crest Substance Abuse Program (DE)** This multi-phase, therapeutic-based program seeks to treat and modify the behaviors of substance abusers in prison and in a work-release center. Of the inmates who participated in the in-prison treatment and work release treatment program, 77 percent had not been rearrested at the 18-month mark, compared to the control group in which 46 percent had not been rearrested within 18 months. Also, 47 percent of participants were drug free at 18 months, compared to only 16 percent of the control group.
- **Prison Fellowship Ministries—InnerChange Freedom Initiative (TX):** This faith-based program prepares inmates in a prison facility near Houston who are planning to return to Harris County or nearby counties for release. The program begins 18 to 24 months prior to release and provides aftercare for 6 to 12 months afterward. According to a University of Pennsylvania study, graduates of the Texas InnerChange Freedom Initiative were 50 percent less likely to be rearrested than a matched comparison group. In addition, eight percent of IFI graduates were returned to prison, compared with 20.3 percent of the non-participants.

**The Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council reflects the commitment of 10 national organizations and a diverse group of federal agencies and private foundations to improve existing re-entry policies.**

- To steer this project, the Council of State Governments partnered with American Probation and Parole Association, Association of State Correctional Administrators, Corporation for Supportive Housing, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, National Association of State Alcohol/Drug Abuse Directors, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, National Association of Workforce Boards, National Center for State Courts, Police Executive Research Forum, and Urban Institute.
- The Report is a public-private partnership, with unprecedented support from three federal agencies, the US Department of Justice, the US Department of Labor, and the US Department of Health and Human Services. The project also received generous support from a variety of private foundations.

**Before Congress adjourned in 2004, Republican and Democratic leaders in both the US House and Senate introduced legislation consistent with many of the recommendations of the *Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council*.**

- The Second Chance Act has been introduced as H.R. 4676 by Rep. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL) and as S. 2789 by Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS) with the co-sponsorship of Sen. Joe Biden (D-DE) and others.
- The bill directs the Attorney General to create an interagency taskforce to identify existing re-entry resources, develop interagency initiatives and a national re-entry research agenda, and report recommendations to Congress.
- These bills, and related legislation introduced by Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) and Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA), also establish demonstration grants for states and local governments that may be used to promote the safe and successful community reintegration of individuals who have been incarcerated, through provision in custody and after release of access to a wide range of supports and emphasis on accountability.

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<sup>1</sup>Paige M. Harrison and Jessica Karberg, *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2002*, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington, DC: 2003), NCJ 198877

<sup>2</sup>Anne Piehl, *From Cell to Street: A Plan to Supervise Inmates After Release* (Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth, January 2002).

<sup>3</sup>Serious and Violent Offender Re-Entry Initiative web site, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice, available at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/reentry/learn.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/reentry/learn.html).

<sup>4</sup>Theodore M. Hammett, "Health-Related Issues in Prisoner Re-Entry to the Community," (paper presented at the Re-Entry Roundtable on Public Health Dimensions of Prisoner Re-Entry of the Urban Institute, Washington, DC, October 2000).

<sup>5</sup>Bureau of Justice Statistics Correctional Survey, presented in *Correctional Populations in the United States, Annual: Prisoners in 2002, and Probation and Parole in the United States, 2002*.

<sup>6</sup>Patrick A. Langan and David J. Levin, *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994*, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington, DC: 2002), NCJ 193427.

<sup>7</sup>Lynn Bauer, *Justice Expenditure and Employment in the United States*, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington, DC: 2002).

<sup>8</sup>National Association of State Budget Offices, *2003 State Expenditure Report*, available online at [www.nasbo.org](http://www.nasbo.org), accessed December 9, 2004.

<sup>9</sup>C. W. Harlow, *Profile of Jail Inmates, 1996*, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington, DC: 1998), NCJ 164620.

<sup>10</sup>Paula.M. Ditton, *Mental Health Treatment of Inmates and Probationers*, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington DC: 1999).

<sup>11</sup>Theodore M. Hammett, Cheryl Roberts, and Sofia Kennedy, "Health-Related Issues in Prisoner Reentry," *Crime & Delinquency* 47, no. 3 (2002): 390–409.

<sup>12</sup>Christopher J. Mumola, *Substance Abuse and Treatment, State and Federal Prisoners, 1997*, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington, DC, 1999) NCJ 172871.

<sup>13</sup>C. W. Harlow, *Profile of Jail Inmates, 1996*, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington, DC: 1998), NCJ 164620.

<sup>14</sup>Jessica Pearson, "Building Debt While Doing Time: Child Support and Incarceration," *Judges' Journal* 43, no. 1 (Winter 2004).

<sup>15</sup>C. W. Harlow, *Education and Correctional Population*, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington, DC: 2003), NCJ 195670.

<sup>16</sup>C. W. Harlow, *Profile of Jail Inmates, 1996*, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Washington, DC: 1998), NCJ 164620.

<sup>17</sup>Jeremy Travis, Amy L. Solomon, and Michelle Waul, *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, March 2003).

<sup>18</sup>Council of State Governments, *Building Bridges: From Conviction to Employment: A Proposal to Reinvest Corrections Savings in an Employment Initiative*, January 2003, viewed online at [www.csgeast.org/crimpub.asp](http://www.csgeast.org/crimpub.asp).

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<sup>19</sup>Margie Phelps, Director of Release Planning, Kansas Department of Corrections, Interview, November 2003.

<sup>20</sup>Jeremy Travis, Amy L. Solomon, and Michelle Waul, *From Prison to Home: The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoner Re-Entry* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2001).

<sup>21</sup>Nancy G. La Vigne et al., *A Portrait of Prisoner Re-Entry in Illinois* (Washington DC: The Urban Institute, 2003).

<sup>22</sup>California Department of Corrections, *Prevention Parolee Failure Program: An Evaluation* (Sacramento: California Department of Corrections, 1997).